

STARS

Florida Historical Quarterly

Volume 41
Number 4 *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol 41,
Issue 4

Article 8

1962

Book Reviews

Florida Historical Society
membership@myfloridahistory.org



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Historical Quarterly by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (1962) "Book Reviews," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 41 : No. 4 , Article 8.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol41/iss4/8>

The American Tory. By William H. Nelson. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961. vi, 194 pp. Index. \$4.80.)

The current re-evaluation of the social consequences of the American Revolution has aroused new interest in the Loyalists. The older studies of Flick and Van Tyne supported on the whole the idea of democratic change. The Loyalists appeared as the right wing of the colonial aristocracy whose expulsion left a void in the upper class and freed the nation from a segment of the population most attached to Old World modes. Their departure and the confiscation of their property sharpened the equalitarian bent of American society. This view has been challenged by recent works which represent the Tories not as an aristocratic group but as a cross section of the population, whose motives were as diverse as their identities. Neither their emigration nor their expropriation affected the society to any degree. Obviously there is room here for a good study. A work of sufficient weight to carry conviction would help to shape our whole conception of early national history.

This is not such a work. The author takes up the prominent Loyalists who got into print and whose writings have been the chief sources of older histories. He depicts their behavior and social attitudes, analyzing the hard choices forced upon them by revolution. The result is a sensitive and thoroughly rewarding essay, full of ideas unencumbered by gross details. Students will be stimulated by reading it, and historians will appreciate the insights it contains. But it will leave historical interpretation about where it was before. If anything, the book sustains the argument in favor of democratic change; for although the author takes note of revisionist studies, his attention is fixed on the aristocratic Tories, the tendencies they exhibited before the Revolution, their ties with the imperial government, their conservative social philosophy, and the widening gap that separated them from the main stream of American life. After one reads this book it is hard to believe that their emigration left no mark upon the country.

The quality of the book is pretty well indicated by the scope of research, which is restricted to such published materials as Loyalist writings, a selection of monographs, and compilations such as Force's *American Archives*. The author uses his sources

perceptively, and his formulations sometimes rise to the point of originality. Perhaps the best part of the book is the discussion of religious issues, including the movement to seat an Anglican bishop in the colonies, as a factor in the Revolution. He draws a nice connection between the republicanism of the Puritan-Dissenter tradition in Britain and the inner propensity of Congregationalism and Presbyterianism in America.

E. JAMES FERGUSON

University of Maryland

Catholics and the American Revolution: A Study in Religious Climate. By Charles H. Metzger, S. J. (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962. 306 pp. \$5.00.)

This is Father Metzger's first book since *The Quebec Act* (New York, 1936) where he explored the pro-Catholic features of the 1774 act as a possible causative factor in the American colonies' decision to break with England. In the present volume he reviews much of the same background: the suspicion, disapproval, open hostility, fear, and persecution with which American Catholics had to contend in nearly all the colonies during the fifty years prior to Independence. This time his principal interest lies in the response of colonial Catholics to the choice put before them after the outbreak of war. "With the unhappy past fresh in their memory, the future shrouded in uncertainty, and neutrality ruled out by the Declaration of Independence, there seemed to be no escape from the Scylla of supporting their foes of yesterday or the Charybdis of provoking new outbursts of hostility and persecution if they stayed loyal to England."

Concentrating on the two chief centers of Catholic population, Pennsylvania and Maryland, Metzger finds that by far the greater number of Catholics opted for Independence. He explains their choice by asserting that the colonial prejudice against them was the sole factor determining their reluctance to join the revolution, and that when this factor was appreciably modified, though not entirely removed, Catholics found the choice a much easier one. Metzger enumerates the chief events subsequent to 1774 that eased the animus against them, notably the colonies' decision

to woo Catholic France. In the end, he claims, Catholics contributed to the common cause "far in excess" of their ratio to the total population.

FR. MICHAEL C. GANNON

Mission of Nombre de Dies
St. Augustine, Florida

Prologue to War: England and the United States, 1805-1812. By Bradford Perkins. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961. 457 pp. \$7.95.)

The problem of historical causation seems in no way more diffuse than when applied to establishing the historicity of a diplomatic rupture, especially one in which a nation's "honor" appears to be at stake.

In Bradford Perkins' *Prologue to War* the author attempts to come to grips with the topic of American nationalism, at its most elusive stage, when it possessed a connotation, unmistakably present in 1812, yet not to emerge as a denotative factor until after peace had been secured in 1815. Rejecting previous interpretations by Pratt, Taylor, Burt, and Hacker as "inadequate," Perkins attempts to introduce a Freudian interpretation for the causes of the War of 1812, and, indeed, he appears to have been fairly successful. *Prologue to War* seeks to illustrate the emotional factors in helping to explain the events and attitudes of the period from 1805-1812, as being of far greater consequence than the more "rational" interpretations of the past.

Perkins visualizes the war as a "search for respectability," not on the part of the nation as a whole, for in general the consensus seemed opposed to open hostilities. Rather, it was because a majority in Congress began to feel that war represented the best means for attaining national identity, which could not be secured by a compromised peace.

The most significant aspect of this volume is an illuminating interpretation of British diplomacy, especially in the seven years period immediately preceding the open break. Through what appears to be a careful and critical examination of British sources, especially the Perceval ministry, Perkins minutely examines Britain's far-reaching diplomatic problems, thereby enlarging signifi-

cantly the perspective of the war. By re-examining American sources, which he documents thoroughly, he is able to weave a masterful fabric relative to the interplay between political and economic forces, to which is added the factor of the intangible, non-rational, and elusive element of nationalism.

In short, Perkins has succeeded in recognizing the significance of the national psyche while retaining a prudent regard for the tangibles, which he obviously recognizes to be the necessary foundation for an historical analysis. As might be expected, neither the administrations of Jefferson nor Madison emerge unscathed; yet, while Perkins is able to assert that "Republicans had jeopardized the national character and the reputation of the United States," the documented evidence tends to support his assertion.

ALAN DAVID ABERBACH

Guilford College

North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860. By Leon F. Litwack. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961. 318 pp. Bibliographical essay and index. \$6.00.)

This is a pioneer study of the American Negro in the antebellum North. The author discusses various evidences of Northern discrimination—the refusal of the state governments to admit the Negro to full citizenship, the separate but unequal educational accommodations in the public schools, the segregation of the Negroes into "ghettos" in the cities, the economic persecution of colored laborers particularly by the Irish, and the segregated practices of the churches in dealing with their Negro brethren. The usually frustrated endeavors of Negro religious leaders and white abolitionists to better the condition of the Northern freedmen are also discussed at length by the author.

The Mason-Dixon line, as Mr. Litwack states, has often been used "to contrast southern racial inhumanity with northern benevolence and liberality." That such a clear-cut contrast does not exist is proved by Professor Litwack's extensive research, for he shows by many examples that before the Civil War "discrimination against the Negro and a firmly held belief in the superiority of the white race were not restricted to one section but shared by

an overwhelming majority of white Americans in both the North and the South."

In the North, public conveyances and facilities either assigned Negroes to segregated sections or denied them their services altogether. Negroes were excluded from the franchise in the vast majority of northern states and were denied the right to sue in courts of justice or to act as jurors. Churches refused Negroes full communicant privileges and relegated them to separate pews or to seats in the rear or balcony of the church buildings. Most northern politicians reflected the voices of their constituents when they steadfastly opposed all measures aimed at extending to freedmen the rights of citizenship. The prewar stand of Abraham Lincoln on these measures brings him closer in thought and word to the twentieth century Mississippian than to the twentieth century northern liberal. Lincoln opposed the Dred Scott decision because he believed that the important question of citizenship should be decided by the several states rather than by the Supreme Court of the United States, not because the decision declared the Negro unworthy of citizenship.

The author's style is readable, his bibliography impressive, and his bibliographical essay a great help to scholars interested in his subject. There is but one minor criticism. Professor Litwack is inclined to sit on the pinnacle of twentieth century American liberal thought and pronounce judgment against Americans who lived almost one hundred fifty years ago, Americans who, unlike him, did not have a century of refreshing humanitarian breezes with which to temper their racial prejudices.

JOSEPH D. CUSHMAN, JR.

Florida State University

Reflections of the Civil War in Southern Humor. By Wade H. Hall. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1961. 88 pp. \$2.00.)

This slight volume was published as one of the University of Florida Monographs in the Humanities. The author, a former resident of Union Springs, Alabama, completed a doctoral degree at the University of Illinois in 1961, and this monograph is a part of his dissertation in revised form. Professor Wade expects

to publish a more extensive volume on the same subject at the University of Florida Press.

This study deals with Southern humor beginning with the Civil War and ending on the eve of World War I. There are chapters on the soldier, the Negro, the poor white, and the "folks at home." The author's technique is a paste-pot job of putting together one anecdote after another about the Civil War. The stories are fascinating although few are humorous in the present sense and many fall into the category of pathos. Some of the stories by well-known humorists like Charles H. Smith ("Bill Arp"), Harry Stillwell Edwards, and Joel Chandler Harris will be familiar to many readers.

These stories fall into the category of folk-lore rather than history, and many of them represent a patina that has formed over the Civil War. Nevertheless, the book will have value for the Civil War historian. One would hope that Professor Hall will furnish more interpretative information in his next book, but one can hardly hope for a volume that is more closely and interestingly written.

EVANS C. JOHNSON

Stetson University

Stanton, the Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War. By Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold H. Hyman. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962. xviii, 643 pp., illustrations. \$8.50.)

What is the basic, fundamental purpose of man? Is it to court fame, and make one's name a household word? If so, Edwin M. Stanton of Ohio, Pittsburgh, and Washington was a great man. Is it to manipulate, move, and shape events so that a man leaves his habitat a different place than he found it? Again Stanton was a great success. Or is it to be happy and enjoy life? Stanton was by this standard one of history's unlucky men. By taking on the burdens of Secretary of War he sacrificed his party standing, profession, fortune, family, and his health.

Stanton was unfortunate too in his biographers. His only good luck here was the failure of his family to carry out their intention of writing his biography. Those who did write it, for nearly a century, were not much better. Thomas and Hyman, however,

collaborators who never met, are of a different calibre. They have produced one of the outstanding biographies in the whole Civil War gallery.

The stock picture of Stanton is that of an irascible old man standing behind a desk growling insults at the parade of War Department favor-seekers, thus bringing efficiency to the war effort, his personality hidden behind glittering spectacles, a tough look, and a bushy gray beard. This striking vignette is mainly, but not entirely, correct. Stanton was never an old man; when he died in 1869 he was only 51. Nor does it rightly characterize him as a man. His range of traits was wide, from grumpy firmness to warm love, loyalty, and shivering fear. The authors bring him to full life as a living, breathing person.

That person was not always admirable. "He was not a great man," they conclude. But his characteristics, "when joined with the personal loyalty to Lincoln, enabled Stanton, the second-rate man, to serve greatly. He *was* the man for those extraordinary times, and he did a titantic job in the face of immense difficulties. . . . Because Lincoln was a great man, Stanton reached in his service a plane far higher than his more prosaic spirit could have touched." Appointed War Department chief as a bipartisan choice, Stanton cleaned house vigorously and within six months was talking resignation. He kept this up for six years, as though he were a tide-waiting politician looking for the main chance rather than a man with a mission. He played on both sides of most questions, like a man who does not know his own mind and has no principles. Thomas and Hyman do not gloss over or excuse these defects and others, but relate, explain, weigh, and analyze.

They do so on an impressive research foundation. The obvious sources on Stanton are frighteningly voluminous. But they did not stop there. They scoured the country, turning up pay dirt in such unlikely archives as the Calais, Ohio, Free Library. Yet they do not allow this erudition to overpower their story, which moves along briskly. Stanton's early years are made as entertaining as a novel, and the Civil War period is fascinating, spiced with a surprising number of little known episodes. McClellan's admirers will find it uncomfortable reading. With Reconstruction the authors are less successful, chiefly because their account runs a

good 100 pages too long. The reader gets a strong impression that the nation will never be reconstructed.

He also reads of events which never happened. Salmon P. Chase was not a student at Kenyon College (p. 42); Frank Blair, not Montgomery, ran for Vice President in 1868 (p. 615); Hilton Head, South Carolina, did not miraculously move to North Carolina (p. 234); General Richard Ewell was "bald, stooped," but not the heroically hirsute Gen. Jubal Early (p. 318); Lincoln did not call out 75,000 volunteers for thirty days service (p. 121), for they would have been completely useless. His ninety-day volunteers were bad enough.

The book invites a more serious criticism, for historians at least, in its reference apparatus. The publisher will probably earn praise for printing footnotes at the bottom of the page instead of sweeping them into the back room. To keep the book from costing an additional dollar, references were shortened by copious use of *op. cit.* and the bibliography left out entirely. Thus the curious reader often has to do research of his own to discover what *op.* is being *cit.*

WILLIAM E. BARINGER

University of Florida

Reconstruction: After the Civil War. By John Hope Franklin. (Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1961. x, 258 pp. Illustrations and index. \$5.00.)

Although this book is extremely well written, it seems to have only two dominant themes. First, it is concerned with vindicating the role of the radical Republicans in the South following the Civil War, and second, it is concerned with denying the myth of "black supremacy" during Congressional Reconstruction. The myth of "black supremacy" has already been adequately demolished, but the author tries to go even further. It would be difficult indeed to support what seems to be his contention that Negro troops in the South were there only by coincidence.

The author points out that by March 15, 1886, Florida had only one regiment of Negro troops within its borders. A Civil War regiment, however, had anywhere from 1,000 to 1,500 men. This number of Negroes, some of whom were probably ex-slaves, could

easily have served as a tremendous reservoir of ill-will in Florida. This is especially true when one considers the rather small population of the state and its "major" cities. The writer's bias is obviously with the Negro in the South after the Civil War, and although a good re-examination of the role of the Negro in the South during Reconstruction is always welcome, this book purports to be concerned with far more than this single aspect of the period.

Within the technical makeup of the book there are two things that deserve comment. First, is the lack of footnotes. Had this book been merely a rehashing of the older works on Reconstruction in the Dunning tradition, one might well understand the exclusion of laborious and repetitious footnotes. However, since this work purports to be concerned with a newer approach to the Reconstruction period, the addition of this valuable aid would surely have served as a guide to the would-be student of the period and might have helped the reader understand how Dr. Franklin arriving at some of his conclusions. The inclusion of a list of certain selected readings, although in no way making up for the exclusion of footnotes, does serve as a useful aid in pointing out some of the general sources of information in this period in American history.

Despite its shortcomings it is a good book, worth reading, especially if one is interested in the role of the Negro in the Reconstruction era.

F. BRUCE ROSEN

Auburn University

Reconstruction Bonds and Twentieth Century Politics. By Robert F. Durden. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1962. xi, 274 pp. Bibliography and index. \$6.00.)

Drawing heavily on the Daniel Lindsey Russell Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina), Robert F. Durden explains and interprets the machinations of Daniel L. Russell and his associates in attempting to use one state (South Dakota) to force another state (North Carolina) to assume financial responsibility for some North Carolina Reconstruction era bonds.

The presentation concerns events in North Carolina, South Dakota, Washington, D.C., New York City, and other locations. Activities of United States Senators and Representatives, including Senator Marion Butler of North Carolina, governors of several states, New York financiers, members of the United States Supreme Court, many persons prominent in the political life of North Carolina during the early years of the present century, and other individuals are described in bringing to the reader this account of Governor Russell's involved scheme. Quotations from newspapers of the period, particularly from Josephus Daniels' *News and Observer*, are used effectively throughout Durden's book.

Approximately 200 of a total of 260 pages in the book are devoted to the Russell effort, which ended in 1905 with the division of almost \$41,000 among Russell and his associates. The first twenty-two pages are concerned with Russell's four year term as Governor of North Carolina (1897-1901). The last forty pages contain brief explanations of other attempts made by Russell and other persons to secure additional gains through the promotion of schemes somewhat similar to the one which Russell brought to partial success in 1905. Most of these forty pages deal with a description and analysis of how the political career of Senator Marion Butler was influenced by his participation in efforts to aid Russell and other "schemers."

This reader's enjoyment of Robert F. Durden's excellent presentation was marred by two very different considerations: (1) the title of the book, *Reconstruction Bonds and Twentieth Century Politics*, seems to promise more than is contained within the covers, and (2) explanatory comments about many of the persons who played minor roles in the Russell scheme are longer than appear necessary.

PAUL E. FENLON

Colorado State University

Wisconsin Carpetbaggers in Dixie. By David H. Overy, Jr. (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin for the Department of History, University of Wisconsin, 1961. ix, 57 pp. Bibliographic note and index. \$3.00.)

The stereotyped "carpetbagger" arrived in the South as one of a horde of locusts and the Southern historian hitherto cared little whence he came, assuming quite happily once a rascal always a rascal. Overy does care, particularly if the place of origin was Wisconsin. There is a danger of studying men in a vacuum with incomplete biographical material. Overy supplies much needed background information that corrects several myths of Reconstruction.

The point of view of this volume is strongly influenced by Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis. A quote from the *Daily Wisconsin*, July 26, 1865, gives Overy's theme: "Come one, Yankee, and show what this land so rich in resources may become. These wooden men who are incubating on it will retire sullenly . . . as the Indian from his hunting grounds." Thus Northerners who had successfully conquered the western frontier eagerly attempted to repeat the same process in the already settled South. The reception of the "carpetbaggers" and their economic and political adventures are already quite well known to even the casual student of history. It was the resistance of the Southerners rather than their own shortcomings, according to Overy, that caused the failure of the "Carpetbag Frontier."

Two of the more prominent "carpetbaggers" were Harrison Reed, Reconstruction Governor of Florida, and his lieutenant-governor and bitter adversary, William H. Gleason. Overy has good thumbnail sketches of the activities of each in Wisconsin and Florida. We are limited somewhat, though, since his source materials are largely what is available in the libraries of the Wisconsin Historical Society and the University of Wisconsin. Unfortunately, he has not to any extent made use of southern manuscript collections such as the William H. Gleason Papers in the P. K. Yonge Library at the University of Florida. The master's thesis of Philip Ackerman, also at the University of Florida, is an excellent study of Reed and Reconstruction in Florida and would have been of assistance to Overy.

Overy's plain factual style gets his points across. His interpretation is logical, and even the most zealous Dixiecrat would probably say that he is objective and fair.

EDWARD C. WILLIAMSON

Auburn University